

### New Postal Circle

1099. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have a proposal to create some new postal circles and new postal divisions during 1996-97;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) At present, there is no proposal to create new postal circles or new postal divisions during 1996-97 due to ban on creation of non-plan Posts.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

[Translation]

### Disturbed Area Allowance

1100. SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH :  
SHRIMATI BHAVNA BEN DEVRAJ BHAI  
CHIKHALIA :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Disturbed Area Allowance is being provided to the employees of Doordarshan and All India Radio posted in disturbed areas;

(b) if so, the amount of allowance paid during each of the last three years, State-wise, Kendra-wise separately;

(c) whether the Government propose to make any other arrangement in its place;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

### Stoppage of Vidarbha Express at Thane

1101. SHRI BHIMRAO VISHNUJI BADADE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have received any representation from the public or any public institutions from Thane with a request to allow the stoppage of Vidarbha Express running between Mumbai and Nagpur; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). Representations have been received including from Shri Jayant S. Deshmukh, Goverdhan Envirotech Private Limited; Shri P.S. Nagrajan, Vice President, Bhartiya Janata Party, Mumbai; Shri Datta Meghe, M.P.; Shri Mukesh Patel, MP; Shri Madhukar Sirpotdar, MP; Shri Hansraj Ahir, MP; Shri Sharad Tasare, Deputy Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly; Shri Kirit Somaiya, MLA; Shri P. Dhole, MLA; etc. for stoppage of 1005/1006 Nagpur-Mumbai CST Vidarbha Express at Thane station. The same has been examined but not found operationally feasible.

### Fake Railway Counters at Railway Stations

1102. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that fake Government tourist counters are functioning at the Railway Stations in the capital;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the passengers are lured by these fake tourist counter officials for making available the accommodation; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

### Loss Incurred by Railways

1103. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps and decisions taken by the Government to reduce or eliminate the losses on uneconomic Railway lines, indicating the details of such lines;

(b) the losses incurred on these lines during 1994-95, 1995-96 and estimated to be incurred during 1996-97; and

(c) the likely impact of these steps on the economy of these Railway lines and on the Railways as a whole?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) On the basis of the review done during 1994-95, 119 branch lines were found to be uneconomical. Since the State Governments are reluctant to agree to the closure of these lines, some steps have been taken to reduce/eliminate losses on the uneconomic lines which include closure/conversion of Stations not remunerative, into halts, running of mixed (passenger and goods) trains, economising on staff, curbing ticketless travel, introduction of rail bus service, etc.

(b) The approximate losses incurred were Rs. 165 crores in 1994-95 and Rs. 166 crores in 1995-96. Figures for 1996-97 are not available.

(c) Despite adoption of various economy measures, the likelihood of these lines becoming viable is remote since the density of traffic on these lines is extremely low and their patronisation is poor.

#### Reducing of Wagon Load Traffic

1104. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry has taken a policy decision to reducing 'Wagon Load' traffic and has reduced allotment of wagon to small consignors and has been encouraging large consignors and has been encouraging large consignors for full rake loads, i.e., full train loads only;

(b) if so, the alternative arrangement made by the Railways for such wagon load traffic; and

(c) if not, the category of goods traffic in wagon load and its volume in terms of Net Tonne-KM and Net Freight Receipt per year for the last three years and the projected traffic for the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) As a matter of operational policy, Railways have encouraged movement of full rake loads to improve productivity of scarce rolling stock thereby eliminating detentions to wagons in marshalling yards. 4-wheeler stock is being phased out and replaced by bogie stock which is not amenable to movement in less than train loads. Elimination of piecemeal wagon movement is also necessary because Railways are basically equipped for transporting high volumes of traffic. However, in order to cater to the needs of small rail customers, Railways have set up a Public Sector Undertaking - Container Corporation of India - under the Ministry of Railways, to aggregate less than train load traffic in multi modal containers and move container trains between identified pairs of points.

#### Overcharged Depreciation

1105. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited has overcharged depreciation and shown a sharply reduced profit in its results for 1995-96;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the statutory auditors raised objections to this overcharging;

(d) if so, whether the Government are aware that the MTNL shares were quoted around Rs. 210-215

(during first week of October, which could fetch around Rs. 300/- per share of the face value of Rs. 10 each; and

(e) the action taken/proposed to avoid recurrence of such overcharging in future?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir. There is no change in the rates of depreciation since inception of MTNL. The net profit has increased by more than 26% in 1995-96 compared to 1994-95.

(b) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Yes Sir. There has been qualification by Statutory Auditors since 1993-94. The Company has already explained in the Annual Reports that in view of the short span of life of the electronic exchanges which is based on computer system, the revised rate of depreciation on apparatus plant, cables and lines and wire in the Schedule XIV of Companies Act i.e. 5.28% is not considered adequate. Thus the prevailing rate of 11.31% is being charged by the Company by exercising its right to charge a suitable rate of depreciation while making disclosure in its accounts.

(d) Price of shares of any listed company like MTNL is driven by the stock market forces.

(e) Question does not arise in view of what has been stated in (a) and (c) above.

#### Royalty Revised on Minerals

1106. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the royalty on minerals is being revised once in three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the minerals on which the royalty has been revised in Madhya Pradesh during each of the last three years; and

(d) the minerals on which royalty is proposed to be revised during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) As per provisions of Section 9 of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 royalty on mineral cannot be enhanced more than once during any period of three years.

(c) and (d). Revision of royalty rates on major minerals other than Coal, Lignite and Sand for Stowing was last made in 1992 which was applicable to Madhya Pradesh also. The Study Group for the next revision of royalty rates on major minerals (other than Coal, lignite and sand for stowing) was constituted on 30.1.95 and the revision of the royalty rates is under consideration of the Government.